

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Lowell M. Porter



Office of the State Fire Marshal

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For Immediate Release

Prevent the Unthinkable

Chief Lowell M. Porter announced that Washington state is participating in the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) campaign to raise awareness about the increased risk of fire death for young children, and to teach parents and caregivers how they can avoid the tragedy. The campaign's message emphasizes installing smoke alarms, securing lighters and matches, and developing a fire evacuation plan under the theme: "Prepare. Practice. Prevent the Unthinkable."

"A baby or toddler under age five dies nearly every day in a residential fire," said Homeland Security Under Secretary Michael D. Brown. "These young children have a disproportionately higher risk of fire death than the rest of the population. They depend on their parents and caregivers to keep them safe, to prevent residential fires from starting, and to increase the chances that the entire family can escape a fire quickly and safely."

"Young children in Washington are more likely to die in a residential fire than the rest of the state's population." Stated Anjela Foster, Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal. "From 1989 to 2002 there were 702 residential fire deaths in Washington and of those deaths, 89 were children under the age of 5."

The Washington State Associations of Fire Marshals advises that every parent and caregiver with young children take a few simple but important steps to prevent these tragedies. Even toddlers can be taught how to quickly respond in case of fire and adults need to know how they will escape with infants.

The Fire Safety Campaign for Babies and Toddlers includes four national partners including the American Academy of Pediatrics, ZERO TO THREE, National SAFE KIDS Campaign and the National Fire Protection Association.

Campaign materials include an educational video on fire safety for babies and toddlers, posters, brochures and fact sheets. The media, parents and caregivers can access the information, in both English and Spanish, at www.usfaparents.gov or can order materials through the U.S. Fire Administration's Publications Online Catalog, at www.usfa.fema.gov/applications/publications/.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of fire protection systems and school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data. For additional information you may visit our web page at www.wsp.wa.gov and then click on State Fire Marshal.

For more information on fire prevention week contact you local fire department, or the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (360) 753-0400.

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